Here’s to Your Health

Leslie Miller

If you are like many people, you probably set a New Year’s resolution to improve your health. In between your treadmill time and your weight workouts, don’t forget to exercise another important muscle—your brain. The web sites featured in this article can help you improve your health, research specific diseases and medical conditions, and learn more about what you can do to live a longer, healthier life. After you have learned about what you can do to live a healthier life, be sure to check out this month’s “Product Snapshots.”

WEB SITES

Drkoop.com (http://www.drkoop.com) features news, virtual communities, interactive tools, and other health resources to help you manage your health and the health of your family. Drkoop.com is led by Dr. C. Everett Koop, former U.S. Surgeon General.

The news stories featured on drkoop.com come from established medical news sources including Reuters and the National Institutes of Health. You can browse through the latest developments in health care, or you can search the news archives to gather information about a specific health issue.

Drkoop.com hosts more than 130 virtual communities, including message boards and online chat rooms. These communities cover everything from support for family and friends of Alzheimer’s patients to information about weight loss.

Drkoop.com also features Drug Checker, an interactive tool you can use to search for information about how the drugs you are taking may interact with other prescription or over-the-counter drugs. You can even use Drug Checker to check for potential drug interactions with foods. The resources section also includes an online pharmacy where you can refill your prescriptions, a physician locator to help you find a doctor in your area, and links to local health resources.

Drkoop.com includes articles on staying healthy, including tips for losing weight, eating a balanced diet, and quitting smoking. In addition, you can access in-depth information on various diseases and medical conditions. You can also sign up to receive free e-mail newsletters on a variety of subjects.

Like drkoop.com, the Mayo Clinic’s Health Oasis (http://www.mayoclinic.org) provides a plethora of health information. This not-for-profit web site is directed by a team of Mayo Clinic scientists, physicians, writers, and educators. Health Oasis provides health information for both patients and the general public.

Health Oasis features a library of online medical information, a medical glossary, and health risk assessment quizzes. The online medical library includes information about general health topics such as first aid and pain management. This library also provides specific information about diseases and medical conditions. For example, you can read in-depth information about the symptoms, diagnosis, and treatment of diabetes or heart disease.

In the Ask Mayo section of Health Oasis, you can read frequently asked questions about health concerns and find out how Mayo Clinic experts answer these questions. You can even submit your own health question to the experts. Health Oasis also features a Products section where you can purchase official Mayo Clinic publications.

The Healthfinder web site (http://www.healthfinder.gov) was developed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as a health information gateway. Healthfinder’s easy-to-navigate interface makes it simple to locate the health information you need. You can explore hot topics such as cancer treatment and prevention and food safety, or you can read the latest health news. You can also find out about common health care scams and about how to report a product complaint.

We Want to Hear From You

Have you recently found a terrific web site, network resource, computer game, or new product and thought, “Every network administrator should know about this”? Now is your chance to spread the word. We want to hear about your discoveries and to share those discoveries with 140,000 other NetWare Connection readers.

Please send your review of a web site, network resource, computer game, or new product to the NetWare Connection editors. If we use your review, we’ll send you a free NetWare Connection T-shirt. In addition, we’ll print your name with the review, making you instantly famous and popular!

Reviews should be between 25–75 words and should include a URL or other source where we can verify the information you provide. Please include your name, telephone number, hometown, and e-mail address.

You can send your review via e-mail to editors@nwconnection.com. You can also mail your review to NetWare Connection, Reader Reviews, P.O. Box 970727, Orem, UT 84097-0727. (NetWare Connection reserves the right to edit and publish any reviews that are submitted.)

Healthfinder also provides links to many other health-related web sites, including medical databases, online libraries, publications and journals, medical dictionaries, and governmental health agencies. For example, you can access statistical infor-
Product Snapshots

Product Snapshots give you a quick overview of the most interesting and useful products I have found during the past month. (Please note that these are first-look reviews; I have not conducted exhaustive testing.)

FIRECRACKER HOME CONTROL KIT

Although the FireCracker home control kit has been available for a while, it has only recently been marketed to a wide audience. As a result, I thought it merited mentioning here. After all, who can resist this little piece of convenient technology when it is priced so right—virtually free. (You simply pay shipping and handling costs.) The FireCracker home control kit from X10 uses the wiring that already exists in your home or office to enable you to control lights, appliances, and more from your computer or from the hand-held PalmPad Remote that is included with the kit. The FireCracker home control kit includes the following components:

• PalmPad Remote. This palm-sized remote enables you to control up to 16 appliances, lights, and more when you are away from your computer.
• Computer Interface. This small device plugs into a serial port on your computer. The throughput design allows you to plug another device into the back of the interface. As a result, you can plug two devices (the interface and one additional device) into the same port.
• Wireless Link Module. The wireless link module receives the signal from the remote or the computer interface and converts that signal to a signal that is carried over household electrical wiring. You can use the wireless link module to control appliances such as a coffeemaker or a radio.
• Lamp Module. Simply plug any incandescent lamp into this module. You can then turn on, dim, or turn off the lamp from your computer or from the remote.
• Downloadable Software. After you receive the hardware pieces of the FireCracker home control kit, you can download the software required to run the equipment. The FireCracker home control kit is compatible with Windows NT, 98, and 95.

The best thing about the FireCracker home control kit is its price. X10 is so certain that you will be satisfied with the technology, that the kit is virtually free. You pay only U.S. $5.90 to cover shipping and handling costs. X10 offers expansion kits so that you can control more household devices. A six-piece expansion kit is U.S. $49.99. A 10-piece expansion kit is U.S. $99.99.

The FireCracker home control kit is available through the X10 web site (http://www.x10.com). For more information about the FireCracker home control kit, visit http://www.x10.com/netware. If you live in the United States or Canada, you can call 1-800-675-3044. Residents of other countries can find contact information at http://www.x10.com/about.htm.

MEMORY STICK WALKMAN

The Memory Stick Walkman, a compact digital storage system from Sony Corp., enables you download your favorite audio files from the Internet. However, unlike many other digital audio players that are available, you can store your music on the Memory Stick removable media. Each Memory Stick holds 64 MB (up to 80 minutes) of music. As a result, you can compile your own music mix and then swap Memory Sticks as your mood changes. For example, you can load one Memory Stick with music from your favorite artist and another Memory Stick with the music you like to listen to while you are exercising.

The Memory Stick Walkman includes Sony’s Music Management Software, OpenMG JukeBox, which allows you to select tracks from your audio CDs and save these tracks as Adaptive Transform Acoustic Coding 3 (ATRAC3) files on your computer. You can then upload these tracks to the Memory Stick Walkman. The Memory Stick Walkman also supports WAV and MP3 file formats. In addition, the Memory Stick Walkman is Secure Digital Music Initiative (SDMI) compliant, enabling you to download secure digital music. (SDMI is a global specification for secure digital music distribution.)

A USB interface enables you to quickly upload music to the Memory Stick Walkman. In fact, it takes only 3 minutes to upload 64 MB of music. In addition, the Memory Stick Walkman is the perfect companion during physical activities because it has no moving parts, which means you get skip-free music.

The Memory Stick Walkman is 1.41” x 3.75” x .75” and weighs approximately 2.36 oz. A built-in Lithium Ion rechargeable battery provides up to four hours of continuous playback. The Memory Stick Walkman is available through retail channels for the suggested price of U.S. $399.95. For more information about the Memory Stick Walkman, visit Sony’s web site (http://www.sony.com). You can also call 1-800-222-7669 or 1-941-768-7669.

WebMD provides a drug database that explains the side effects of prescription and over-the-counter drugs and herbs. In addition, the drug database provides information about how these drugs work and how they may interact with each other. WebMD also features several interactive tools to help you understand your health. For example, you can find out your target heart rate, and you can calculate how many minutes you must jog to work off the milkshake you had at lunch.

If you or someone you know has recently been diagnosed with a medical condition or disease, the Newly Diagnosed section may be especially helpful. This section provides in-depth information about specific medical conditions and diseases and offers a support community via online chat rooms and message boards.

WebMD also provides My Health Record, a secure web-based vault for you to store detailed health records, such as...
vaccination dates, current prescriptions, and phone numbers for you and your family. You can then give your physician, your child’s school, or other health care professionals permission to access the information in that profile. The information remains secure and can only be accessed by those people to whom you have given permission. For more information about the security of this web site, visit http://my.webmd.com/my_health_record.

**NETWORK RESOURCE**

Enterprise SuperSite Network (http://enterprise.supersites.net) is a one-stop shop for getting an overview of what is happening in the networking world. Enterprise SuperSite Network features links to a variety of networking information, including professional associations, technical news publications, and networking products. For example, using the Buyer’s Guide, you can search for a specific company, or you can browse through a category of products such as routers, desktop systems, or telephony products.

Enterprise SuperSite Network also features a Jobs section where you can explore high-tech careers, find out which companies are planning to go public, learn what skills you develop, and which career path you choose. In addition, be sure to worry about saving the world.

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**STANDALONE GAME OF THE MONTH**

*Planescape: Torment* from Black Isle Studios (a division of Interplay Productions) is an Advanced Dungeons and Dragons single-player 2-D fantasy game. *Planescape: Torment* is built on BioWare’s Infinity Engine, the same game engine used in the popular Baldur’s Gate game. A sequel to ‘*Advanced Dungeons and Dragons* game, *Planescape: Torment* is filled with mystical characters and magical weapons. Be warned, things are rarely what they seem to be.

The setting for *Planescape: Torment* is the Planescape “multiverse.” This multiverse is a series of planes, or dimensions, that rotate around a city known as Sigil, which is ruled by the enigmatic Lady of Pain. Scattered through the labyrinth of Sigil’s streets are portals (some hidden, some obvious) that take you to neutral ground where you can then exit to anywhere, provided you have the key.

In *Planescape: Torment*, you take the role of a scarred, amnesiac immortal who is searching for his identity. In the beginning of the game, you wake up on a cold stone slab in a mortuary in Sigil. You must escape the mortuary and then explore Sigil to learn the secret of your death and rebirth.

One of the unique characteristics of *Planescape: Torment* is that you cannot die. Rather, when you sustain enough damage to kill a standard mortal, you fall into a deep coma and eventually reawaken in a new world. You must then resume your quest for your identity. As an immortal, you can speak with the dead and reattach severed limbs.

*Planescape: Torment* adapts to your gaming style to determine how strong you get, which skills you develop, and which career path you choose. In addition, because your only goal is to discover your identity and your destiny, you don’t need to worry about saving the world.

*Planescape: Torment* supports Windows 98 and 95 and is available through retail channels for the suggested price of U.S. $49.95. For more information about *Planescape: Torment*, you can visit http://www.planescape-torment.com. You can also call 1-800-INTERPLAY or 1-949-553-6678.

**NETWORK GAME OF THE MONTH**

*Unreal Tournament* from Epic Games Inc. is a multiplayer deathmatch game that far surpasses the features of its predecessor, *Unreal*. If you have played *Unreal*, you know that although the single-player mode worked well, the multiplayer mode was less exciting.

*Unreal Tournament*s multiplayer mode is about as far from the original *Unreal* as you can get. Epic has redesigned the interface, rewritten the networking code, and optimized the graphics code to create an entirely new experience. *Unreal Tournament* includes 60 playable levels, five modes of play, and a free in-game editor.

*Unreal Tournament* does include a fairly detailed single-player game. However, it is in multiplayer mode that *Unreal Tournament* really shines. The multiplayer mode is broken up into five different modes of play.

In **Deathmatch mode**, you can choose to play as individuals or as teams. The goal is to get as many kills as possible in order to win each level. A variation of the Deathmatch mode is called Last Man Standing. The goal of this level is to kill your enemies and to be the last man alive.

One of the most popular multiplayer modes is Capture the Flag. The goal, of course, is capture as many of your enemy’s flags as possible while protecting your own team’s flags.

In the **Domination mode**, you must take control of various command posts and then defend these posts. A assault is the most detailed mode of play. The goal of the Assult mode is to attack or defend a specific target, such as a giant cannon on the beach.

If you want to practice your skills before you jump into an online game, you are in luck. *Unreal Tournament* has a computer-controlled opponent, or “bot,” to match your skills. You can also configure bots to be part of your team and follow your commands. For example, you can assign a bot to protect your flag while you go off to capture the enemy’s flag, or you can command your bot to be your personal bodyguard. If you can defeat the most highly skilled bots, you should have no problem dominating an online game.

*Unreal Tournament* supports Windows NT, 98, 95, and Macintosh. *Unreal Tournament* is also available for Linux; however, Epic Games provides no technical support for the Linux version. You can purchase *Unreal Tournament* through retail channels for the suggested price of U.S. $49.99. For more information about *Unreal Tournament*, you can visit http://www.unrealtournament.com. You can also call 1-800-610-4847 or 1-425-867-2565.